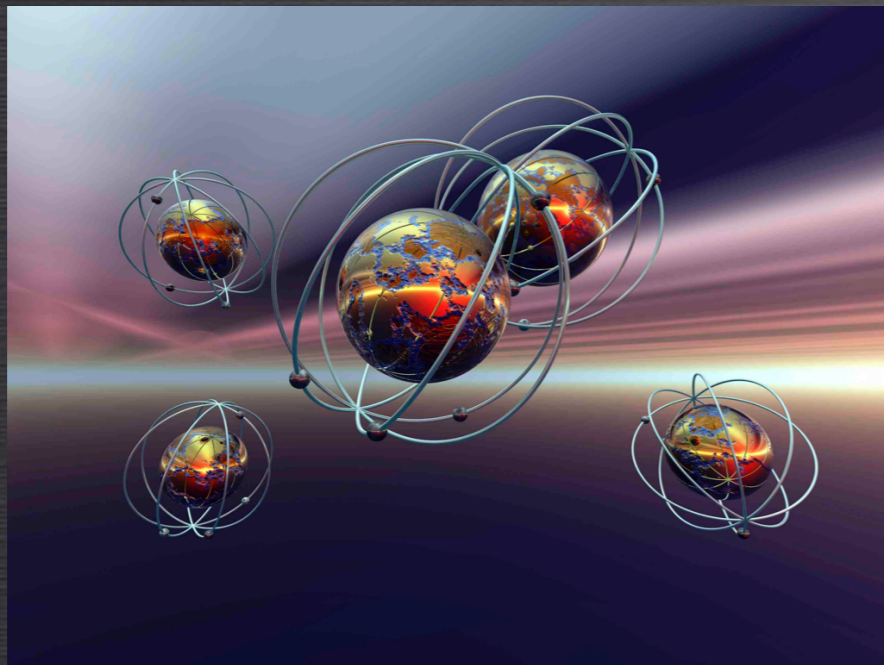


# MATERIALISM & ORDINARY REALITY

HZT4U1 - MR. A. WITTMANN - UNIT 5 – LECTURE 2



“THERE EXISTS NO KIND OF SPIRITUAL SUBSTANCE OR ENTITY OF A DIFFERENT NATURE FROM THAT OF WHICH MATTER IS COMPOSED.”

-HUGH ELLIOT

# WHAT IS ORDINARY REALITY?

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- “Real” things have certain characteristics that make-up their independent existence and which we use to determine if they are real.
  1. Continuous existence when not being perceived or used
  2. Can be experienced by others
  3. Ability to have causal effects on other things, even when not perceived
- Ordinary reality is made of..
  1. substance
  2. universals
  3. cause & effect
  4. space-time

# SUBSTANCE

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- According to Aristotle the continuing “thing or stuff” that endures through time.
- Features, attributes, properties or qualities, of substances may change but it still continues to exist (i.e. tree).
- Properties are dependent upon substance and can't exist alone.
- Substance has properties, which can change, but substance stays the same (i.e. car colour, state of water).
- Substances have sets of “essential properties” that make them what they are.
- A substance goes out of existence if it loses any part of its essential properties.

# UNIVERSALS

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- General types, classifications, categorizations, or ways in which things are the same.
- There are many different universals that apply to individual substance or essential property (i.e. textbook falls under many general types; book, object, rectangular, etc.)
- Do universals exist over and above substances (**Plato's Forms**), or do our minds create universals by abstracting from the substances, which are all that exist (**nominalism**)?
- Aristotle claimed that universals are real, but only exist because of their relationship to their various substances.

# CAUSE & EFFECT

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- One thing makes another thing change its properties, or come into or out of existence.
- Cases of causation both obvious and subtle (i.e. moon and tides).
  - Does every change require a cause, or do some things happen randomly?
  - Is power/energy transferred or does one thing regularly occurring after another (constant conjunction)?
  - Must cause precede its effect, or can cause and effect be simultaneous?

# SPACE-TIME

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- Location in space and time make different parts of matter different from each other and individualize mental things.
- Space and time consist of different parts, or locations, that are surrounded by other spatial or temporal parts.
- Space is thought to have 3 fixed dimensions (length, width, height), while time passes (past, present, future).

# MATERIALISM

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- The view that matter is the ultimate constituent of reality, or primordial physical substance, that ultimately constitutes reality.
- The Indian **Charvaka** philosophers (600 B.C.) said that only what the senses perceive is real, so only the physical, material world is real.
- Pre-socratic philosopher **Democritus** (460–360 B.C.) said all real objects even the soul and mind are made up of material atoms.

# MATERIALISM

(CONTINUED)

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- Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle shifted intellectual focus to humanistic morality and virtue, eclipsing materialism.
- Christianity continued this tradition throughout the Middle Ages.
- Materialism reemerged in the 17th century, with the rise of scientific method and scientific discoveries.
- Awakened by the discoveries of Copernicus, Kepler, Galileo, and Newton, people watched science cultivate a full-blown materialism.

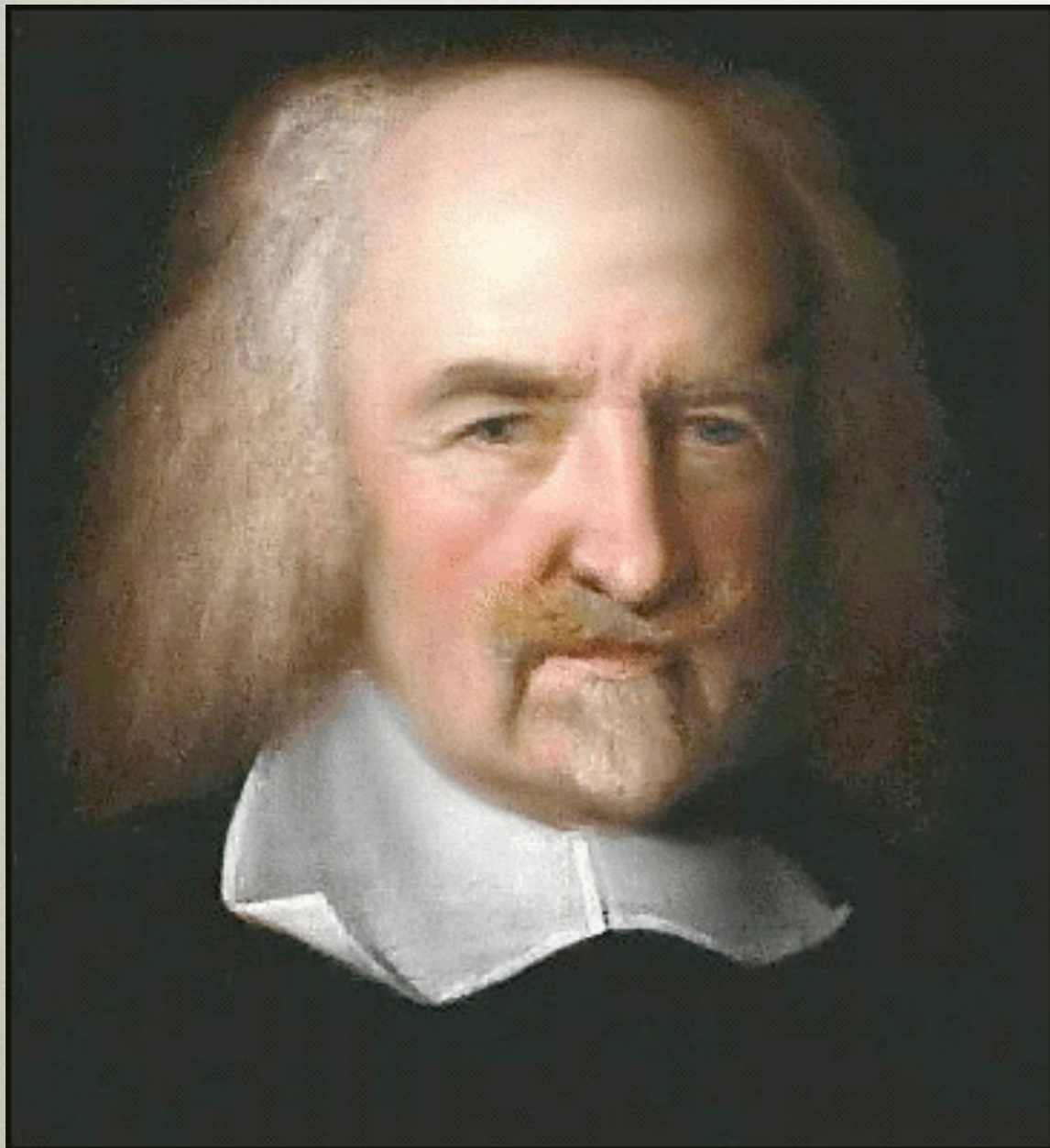
# SAINT AUGUSTINE (354–430)

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- One of the greatest of the early Christian theologians, believe that spirits were a real part of the world.
- God structured reality (the real existing universe) to include every possible kind of material, from the “lowest” kind of inert matter to the “highest” kind of spirit material.
- Humans are between the lower and high realms of reality (**idealistic dualism**).
- Many people today are in fact materialists, who deny that spirit world exists.

# THOMAS HOBBES (1588–1679)

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- In Leviathan, Hobbes held that ultimately we can know nothing about the world other than its measurable aspects.
- Measurable matter is all there is in the universe.
- Only matter is real.
- Our mental states (sensations, thoughts, and emotions) are states of our material brain.

# JULIEN OFFROY DE LA METTRIE (1709-1751)

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- Carried this Hobbesian psychology further when he published Man a Machine (1748).
- He argued that humans are nothing more than complex bio-chemical machines and mental elements are projections of the physical brain.
- Thus, by the 19th century materialism reached its the logical conclusion.

# OBJECTIONS TO MATERIALISM

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- Werner Heisenberg's Principle of Indeterminacy (1949).
  - Subatomic particles are like forces, which have no determinate locations or velocities, thus, the universe is made up of mental stuff.
  - At the subatomic level, independent physical reality seems to disappear, leaving only “probability fields” of potential entities that do not become real or material until they interact with the mind.
- N. R. Hanson, The Dematerialization of Matter (1963).
  - Subatomic particles (electrons, protons, neutrons) can be broken down into more than 200 elementary particles, which made up of more elementary entities called quarks, which seem more like energy, fields, or waves.

# MULTIVERSE

**Are there only three dimensions in other universes or could there be more?  
(Submitted by Andre Lapiere)**

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**THE END**